

# Independent Living Services Guidebook

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## **Independent Living Services**

### **I. Administrative Overview**

#### **A. Policy**

The Department will prepare every eligible youth for the transition to independent living by providing services to assist in obtaining self-sufficiency in adulthood. Independent living may be the permanency objective for a youth age 16 or older whose best interest is served by self-sufficiency. A written Independent Living Plan will include a description of the services, supports and programs the youth age 16-18 receives to acquire the skills necessary for self-sufficiency as an adult. The Independent Living Plan will be submitted to the court for 6 month reviews.

#### **B. Philosophy**

One of the developmental tasks for all youth is to prepare for adulthood. This preparation is a life-long process, which requires different emphasis at various ages. The youth's parents, relatives, teachers and other significant adults play an important role in assisting the youth in this preparation through informal and formal modeling and teaching. Youth who are in the Department's care and custody, especially teens, are also in need of this preparation.

The Department helps youth in its custody prepare for adulthood, and has specific, more focused services targeted for youth age 16 or older. Informal and formal modeling and teaching given by parents, relatives, care givers, mentors, significant others, community and/or educational services are extremely important. In a more formal way, the Department will create the environment necessary to assist youth in preparing for self-sufficient adulthood and independent living by incorporating youth development strategies into policy and practices.

#### **C. Youth Development Approach and Strategies**

The Youth Development approach is a simple concept that all who work with youth should employ. It's seeing the strengths, assets and attributes of a person, regardless of their position in their community, regardless of their living arrangement in our system, and regardless of the labels that have been given them by systems, communities, and society; then using those strengths, assets, and attributes to help the individual grow.

Youth Development concepts are not new, but they are being revitalized in the Department of Health and Human Services and Protection and Safety Workers can assist by:

- engaging youth in their own decision-making, as much and as often as possible and appropriate;
- encouraging youth to take on age appropriate responsibilities;
- incorporating youth development approaches into daily practices of policy and procedures regarding young people;
- providing opportunities for independent functioning based on age and developmental level;
- providing homes, services and supports for youth and youth that are trained and educated in preparing youth and youth for self-sufficient adulthood;
- providing homes and services for youth and youth that teach life skills through experiential hands-on learning techniques;
- providing adult interaction that are seen as opportunities for modeling positive social and communication skills; and

- contracting with service providers and locating informal supports who are willing to employ the youth development concepts described.

#### **D. Federal Independent Living Initiative - Background**

The Federal Independent Living Initiative was funded by congress in 1985, and the states received funding in October of 1988. The purpose of the funding was to provide life skills training, and other independent living, readiness skills to youth in out-of-home systems. The skills youth needed to prepare them to live as self-sufficient adults after they aged-out of the systems were not being taught on a consistent basis across the country.

#### **E. The Chafee Foster Care Independence Act**

The Chafee Foster Care Independence Act was passed in 1999. The goals of the Act are to:

1. Help youth transition to self-sufficiency
2. Help youth receive the education, training and services necessary to obtain employment
3. Help youth prepare for and enter post secondary training and educational institutions
4. Provide personal and emotional support to youth through mentors and the promotion of interactions with dedicated adults
5. Provide financial, housing, counseling, employment, education and other appropriate support and services to former foster care recipients between 18 and 21 years of age
6. Make available vouchers for education and training, including post secondary education, to youth who have aged out of foster care

#### **F. Nebraska Law**

LB103 was signed into affect in 1993, and became Nebraska Revised Statute 45-285. The statute follows the federal mandate that all youth age 16 and older must have an Independent Living Plan, based on an individual assessment of their needs and strengths. This plan must include services, supports and programs outlined as goals and objectives to meet the youth needs in preparing for adulthood. This Independent Living Plan is then viewed and approved by the court in writing every 6 months during youth case reviews.

#### **G. Terminology:**

1. Education and Training Vouchers Program (ETV): a program that provides assistance with expenses related to post secondary education for current and former foster youth 17-23. Up to \$5,000.00 per year per student depending on need.
2. Former Ward Program: a program that offers extended assistance to assist eligible youth after their discharge from the Department to continue their education in preparing for gainful employment.
3. Friends of Foster Care Program: a private non-profit organization that supports youth during preparation and transition to independence. Support is given for requests that will assist the youth or young adult in reaching goals of employment, safe housing, furthering their education, accessing physical and mental health services not covered under other public funding sources, or having connections to positive adults.

4. Independent Living: a permanency objective; and/or a living arrangement.
5. Independent Living Preparation: knowledge and skill building in preparation for adulthood needed for every youth regardless of age, but especially for adolescent youth age 16 and older in the custody of HHS with a permanency goal of independent living, or long-term foster care.
6. Preparation for Adult Living Services (PALS): a contracted program to provide skills training, planning and movement into an independent living setting for state wards within 6 months of becoming independent (generally minimum age 17), and which provides independent living services for youth who are no longer wards, (age 18 through 20 years of age), including securing housing, face to face life skills training, securing employment, and assistance in furthering education.
7. Support System: a person who is there for the youth as a friend, advisor, and trusted confidant. This is a necessary component in everyone's life, especially, the life of a youth who is living on his/her own in the community.
8. Transitional Living Programs (TLP): contracted programs that provide direct services for eligible youth who are transitioning to independent living, as well as extra support and training to care providers of state ward youth age 16 and older.

## **II. Case Management Activities**

Youth in their teens who come to the Department and may be delayed in their readiness for self-sufficient adulthood will need more emphasis on preparation for Independent living than others their age. Contractors are prepared to assist staff, care providers, parents, youth, relatives, communities and others in the role of preparing youth for self-sufficiency.

The worker will assist youth regardless of age or permanency objective in preparing for adulthood through general case management activities. The activities should be based on the youth's ability and developmental level.

1. General Protection and Safety Worker case management activities include:
  - Assessing the youth's strengths and needs;
  - Development of the plan that includes a Preparation for Independent Living Plan;
  - Coordinating services and working with providers to meet the youth goals and objectives;
  - Evaluating the effectiveness of services and the continued need;
  - Helping the youth prepare for discharge or an independent living arrangement. Conducting a meeting with youth prior to them leaving care and custody of the State (see V-3.g, page 10).
2. Independent Living Plan Development

**All youth age 16 through 18 regardless of permanency objective will have a Preparation for Independent Living Plan for supporting themselves as an adult. This plan shall include the youth's goals for employment, education, financial support, housing, a support system and transportation arrangements.**

Independent Living Plans must be developed by the Protection and Safety Worker for all state wards 16 years of age and older as per Legislative Bill 103, regardless of placement or permanency goal. This Independent Living Plan must include a written description of the programs and services planned to address the youth's preparation for self sufficiency and independent living.

The worker will include services to prepare the youth for Independent living in the Independent Living Plan for all youth age 16 to 18, whether the youth is living at home or is in out-of-home care. A youth whose permanency goal is independent living will receive a proportionately greater emphasis on these services. The specific Independent Living Plan will be based on an assessment of the youth readiness for independent living. The Independent Living Plan needs to be documented on the N-FOCUS system. To do this the Protection and Safety Worker can:

Navigate to the Person Detail window, and double click on Master Case icon.

- This takes you to List Master Case window, highlight the CFS case under the Program Cases listing and click on the yellow PC button on the right side of the screen.
- This takes you to the Detail Program Case window, highlight the name of the youth and click on the Independent Living Plan button
- This takes you to the List Independent Living Plan window, double click on the "original" plan.
- This takes you to the Detail Independent Living Plan window, check the box labeled "Preparation for Adult Living Service Plan included"

If youth do not have an ILP listed on N-FOCUS, follow the above steps and click on the "Goals" button in the Detail Independent Living Plan Window. This will show you a list of goals you may want to work on with the youth. Click the "OKAY" button and enter goals and tasks on the List Independent Living Plan Goals window. Then close the window and check the box labeled "Preparation for Adult Living Service Plan included".

The youth's Independent Living Plan should include the goal(s) and service(s) selected:

- a. Enhanced Self Esteem; The youth will develop self-esteem, a positive self-image and a realistic confidence in her/his abilities to be successful in independent living. Options to provide services include:
  - Individual or group counseling by worker, foster parent, or residential staff, therapist or school counselor;
  - Meetings with former wards who have successfully made the transition or who have struggled with transitioning;
  - Participation in a conference for youths in foster care;
  - Positive feedback from the worker or the involved adults regarding actual accomplishments and strengths; or
  - A formal and/or informal assessment of the youth's life skills and strengths.
- b. Acquisition of Necessary Life Skills; The youth will have necessary life skills in the following areas:
  - Locating and maintaining housing;
  - Home management (food preparation, cooking, cleaning and laundry);
  - Shopping and effectiveness as a consumer;
  - Use of community systems and services;
  - Health care (personal care, family planning, medical assistance);

- Money management (handling of finances, budgeting, saving);
- Leisure time (recreational and vocational activities);
- Personal decision making (such as, problem-solving skills);
- Communication skills; and
- Understanding of sexual development and family planning alternatives.

Options to provide services include:

- use of a family member, relative, family friend or volunteer to assist in the application of specific skills or to assist with teaching skills.
- Individual modeling/ teaching by foster parent(s), residential staff, or worker;
- Participation in life skills training;
- Supervised practice in the skills listed.

- c. Enhanced Self Identity: The youth will have an enhanced self-identity by understanding her/his own past and having the documents necessary for self-sufficiency as an adult. Options to provide services include:

- Use of a life story book to understand past experiences and strengths, and to improve the youth's sense of control over her/his life; or
- Obtaining of necessary documents such as:
  1. Social Security card;
  2. Birth certificate;
  3. Driver's license, or learner's permit, if appropriate;
  4. School records and diploma or high school equivalency certificate;
  5. Medical records, including immunization record, medical history;
  6. other documents that are necessary in the transition to independent living.

- d. Identifying and Addressing Educational Needs: For information on how to work with youth to address educational needs see 390 NAC 11-002.02.

The worker shall:

1. Assure that family team meetings and case plans include a discussion of the youth's progress in school and what, if any, additional services might be needed and how they will be obtained.
2. Review school reports on the youth's progress to assure that accurate information is available and is the basis for planning and for reporting to the court.
3. Assure that actions are taken when it appears that educational services are not being provided, such as assistance from the Protection and Safety Legal Team.
4. Assure that the youth's school records are transferred when the youth moves from one school to another.

When the youth's parent is unable or unwilling to exercise his or her educational rights for the youth, the school is responsible to appoint a surrogate parent for these purposes. When that happens, the worker should continue to provide support to the surrogate in meeting the youth's educational needs.

- e. Adequate Job or Career Plan: The youth will develop a job or career plan and secure and maintain employment. Options to provide services include:

1. The use of vocational testing or career assessment tools through the public school or community college;

2. Participation in individual or group sessions addressing job or career planning and employment-related skills;
  3. Participation in specialized or individually developed job training programs; or
  4. In combination with approaches in 1, 2, and 3, pairing of a youth with a volunteer or mentor from the community during the youth's transition to independent living.
- f. Adequate Support System; The youth will have a support system available to assist in the transition to independent living. The worker, parent, care giver, mentor and others involved will help the youth devise step-by-step plans to achieve her/ his goals. Options to provide services include:
1. Involvement with family or extended family members to maintain and improve relationships between the youth and family members, enhance positive interaction, and aid the family to understand the youth's development and the importance of the family;
  2. Involvement with the foster family or appropriate residential staff to maintain and improve relationships between the youth and the foster family or staff, enhance positive interaction, and aid the foster family or residential staff to understand the youth's developmental task and the importance of continuity of relationships;
  3. Identification and maintenance of other supportive relationships between the youth and persons outside the Department;
  4. Arrange for a volunteer mentor to aid the youth in making the transition to independent living;
  5. Arrange for informal supports with family members, relatives, or friends.
3. Meeting prior to discharge

Approximately 3 months prior to the youths exit from the system, the Protection and Safety Worker should conduct a Team Meeting with all of the people important to the youth, including both formal and informal supports. The youth should help to identify who they want at the meeting. The Independent Living Plan for the youth should be discussed and at a minimum include the following issues: living arrangement, employment, educational plan (including the Former Ward Program and Educational and Training Vouchers Program), budget, transportation, health care, social life, recreation, acquisition of important documents and formal and informal support system. Roles and responsibilities should be assigned for any tasks needing to be accomplished prior to the transition to independent living.

### **III. Transitional Living Programs (TLP)**

- A. Purpose: These programs are designed to provide assessment, preparation and support for youth transitioning to independent living, as well as provide apartment units for youth to live in. Staff will work with youth one on one and may also provide group activities related to learning independent living skills. Training and support are provided throughout the transitional process during the day, evening and on weekends. Transitional Living Program staff takes responsibility for implementing the youths HHS Independent Living Plan.
- B. Eligibility: Youth (minimum age 17) who are in the States custody or who were dismissed from custody after their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday (includes pregnant and/or parenting youth). Youth can participate up to age 21.



- C. Benefits: Program staff assists youth through assessment, preparation, and one on one support which continues after the youth moves to an independent living arrangement. The Transitional Living Programs either own or sign leases for youth in apartments and pay for phone installation and phone bills, furniture and basic household supplies. Financial incentives may be provided when a youth reaches certain goals or completes identified tasks.

#### **IV Preparation for Adult Living Services (PALS)**

- A. Purpose: This program is designed to provide support and guidance for youth who are transitioning to independent living. A PALS specialist will work one on one with these youth to assess their strengths and abilities, as well as assist youth in identifying their personal vision for becoming a successful independent adult. The PALS program provides assistance prior to, during and after a youth's transition to an independent living arrangement by providing training and support with youth during the day, evening and on weekends. PALS specialists take responsibility for implementing the youths HHS Independent Living Plan.
- B. Eligibility: Eligible youth are those who are within six months of transition from a foster home or other residential service to independence and have no other supportive services directed toward preparation for adult living or are in group care or agency based treatment home and within 30 – 60 days of being placed in an independent living situation. Youth accepted for services through PALS should be age 17 or older. Under well-documented circumstances a youth age 16 may be accepted for services. Under such circumstances the youth's situation will be reviewed by the Department's Service Area Administrator or their designee. The Contractor will accept such referrals on a 16 year old only when the referral has the signed authorization and agreement by the Service Area Administrator or their designee.
- C. Benefits: PALS Specialists assist youth through assessment, preparation, and one on one support which continues after the youth moves to an independent living arrangement. Financial incentives may be provided when youth reaches certain goals or completes identified tasks.
- D. Program Objectives of Preparation for Adult Living Services and Transitional Living Programs: Contractors shall assist youth in preparing for independent living. Assistance may be provided through active role modeling, sharing of information and resources, youth advocacy, accessing needed services, identifying local housing availability, instruction, as well as crisis intervention. Adult advisors or mentors may act as support systems for youth and although not trained as counselors, may provide informal, practical advice under the supervision of the Protection and Safety Workers in the Service Areas.
- E. Expected Outcomes for Youth in Preparation for Adult Living Services and Transitional Living Programs: The expected outcomes for youth who are 16 and older shall include, but should not be limited to:
- Youth have sufficient resources to meet their daily living needs
  - Youth have a stable place to live
  - Youth attain academic or vocational educational goals
  - Youth have a sense of being connected
  - Youth avoid illegal activities
  - Youth postpone parenthood
  - Youth have access to physical and mental health services
  - Youth have a sense of well being

- Youth have a strong sense of personal and cultural identity

F. Service Components of Preparation for Adult Living Services and Transitional Living Programs

1. Assessments: the approved assessment tool is the Ansell-Casey Life Skills Assessment. This is an online assessment and can be accessed at [www.caseylifeskills.org](http://www.caseylifeskills.org)
2. Plan Development: The development of an Independent Living Plan designed to assist youth, 16 & older, in preparing for self-sufficiency. This will be included in the Youth's Independent Living Plan and will reflect the assessment of the youth's strengths and needs. The Plan will identify goals, action steps to be taken to meet the goals, timelines, and responsibilities. The Preparation for Independent Living Plan will be written with youth involvement, and with participation from other parties involved in the youth's care.
3. Coordination: The PALS or TLP staff will be responsible for the management and implementation of each youth's Independent Living Plan and regularly reporting to the Department's Protection and Safety Worker on the progress toward, and achievement of, identified goals.
4. Instruction: Formal and informal individual or group instruction as specified in the youth's plan to achieve the identified goals.
5. Experience: The youth will be given the opportunity to practice, demonstrate, and apply learned skills in the most appropriate setting, usually the youth's residence.
6. Mentoring: An effort will be made to connect the youth with the community volunteers for encouragement, support, and assistance as the youth transitions to independent living.
7. Resource Development and Networking: Recruiting and/or identifying community supports, and linking youth to appropriate resources. This could include identifying, and securing apartments for youth transitioning to Independent Living and identifying employment opportunities.
8. Independent Living Supervision: The Protection and Safety Worker will provide, or refer to service providers who will provide, regular contacts with state ward youth who are placed in an apartment, or dorm setting to assess, support, and monitor the youth's ability to successfully apply learned skills. Contacts may be made during day, evening and week-end hours. A gradual decrease in the contacts may occur over time with approval by the youth's Protection and Safety Worker.

## **V. Education and Training Vouchers Program (ETV)**

- A. Purpose: To provide monetary assistance for current and former foster youth with funding assistance to help with postsecondary expenses. Independent Living Planning and on-going review is provided assuring that the educational needs of the youth are met. The ETV Program will involve each participating youth in developing and designing an approved education and training plan that will assist their transition to self-sufficiency as an adult. The plan will identify the connections to educational personnel, resources, and supports. The plan will identify the requirements of a satisfactory level of performance and that each recipient will recognize and accept their personal responsibility for participation in the program. The ETV application will require supporting documentation, including a copy of the youth's Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), an award letter from the youth's chosen post-secondary school showing financial aid, and the youth's personal living expenses budget and income.
- B. Eligibility: Youth eligible are those who:
- Are aging out of foster care or
  - Received guardianship status after the age of 16 or
  - Were adopted at age 16 or older or
  - Are in out-of-home placement or
  - Were formerly in out-of-home care at the time of their discharge from the State and are now 17 to 23 years of age. Youth must be participating in the ETV program at age 21 to continue to age 23.

Youth must maintain a C average to remain eligible.

- C. Benefits: Youth receive assistance with completing a Free Application for Federal Student Aid in order to apply for a Federal Pell grant. Once the Pell grant amount is determined the ETV staff will assist youth with establishment of a budget and the youth can receive a maximum of \$5,000.00 per year for additional education related expenses. For those youth not involved in the Former Ward Program, health insurance may be purchased for the youth while attending school, if offered by the educational institution.

## **VI. Former Ward Program**

- A. Purpose: To assist former wards of the State in continuing their education through room and board assistance.
- B. Eligibility: Youth must be at least age 18 up to their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday and be single and be a former ward of the Department or ward through relinquishment who was in out of home care at the time of his/her discharge. Eligible youth must enter the Former Ward Program prior to discharge from the Department or meet one of two exceptions:
1. a youths attendance is postponed due to a mental or physical incapacity which prevents participation in an educational program for a temporary period of time;
  2. a youth may sit out one school term from the time of discharge from ward ship through age 20. This includes the semester immediately following discharge if that was the plan before discharge.

Youth that have entered into the Former Ward Program, are attending classes and then experience an interruption due to mental or physical incapacity may sit out until such time as the incapacity abates.

Youth may also be in the Former Ward Program while completing high school if they had their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday while still attending high school and the plan is for the youth to complete high school and continue their education and they remain in the foster home while finishing high school.

- C. Benefits: Youth will be covered by Medicaid if income and resource criteria are met. Youth may receive a monthly payment to assist in meeting living expenses up to a maximum of \$352.00 per month. If a youth is living in a dormitory the Department pays the dorm fees, including a deposit directly to the institution. If the youth lives in a dormitory and HHS is paying the dormitory directly. If some meal expenses are not included in the dormitory costs, the youth may receive a grant of \$100.00 for weekend meals or laundry. (Policy Reference: 479-000-307 #9)

## VII. Service Referral Process

- A. Referring youth to the **Transitional Living Programs (TLP)**, Protection and Safety Workers should:
  - 1. Make a referral using the Common Information and Referral form.
  - 2. When youth is accepted, show placement on N-FOCUS as "Independent Living" (IL) and select the living arrangement that describes the situation, "apartment or house"
  - 3. Under the CFS case authorize first month's rent up to \$352.00 and up to \$210.00 deposit.

The Protection and Safety Worker should work with the Income Maintenance Foster Care Worker to determine eligibility and open an Independent Living (IL) program case. The youth may qualify for \$352.00/month. Qualifying includes looking at income and expenditures for the youth. Youth who do not participate in the TLP program may also be eligible for these funds.

**Note:** The monthly check should be made out to the youth, but mailed to the administrative office of the TLP Program. The program then budgets with the youth and gets paid the rent due them.

- B. Referring youth to **Preparation for Adult Living Services (PALS)**, Protection and Safety Workers should:
  - 1. Make a referral using the "Common Information and Referral Form". A youth may be referred to PALS within 6 months of transferring from their current placement or while living on their own.
  - 2. If youth is living independently in their own apartment follow the same process as steps 2 and 3 above.
  - 3. If the youth is eligible for PALS the \$352.00 monthly check is made out to the youth and mailed to the youth.
- C. Referring a youth to the **Education and Training Vouchers Program (ETV)** Protection and Safety Workers should contact Central Plains Center for Services.

Applications can be faxed, sent via mail or by HHS internal e-mail (Lotus Notes) to:

Central Plains Center for Services,  
908 E Street  
Broken Bow, NE 68822  
Phone: 308-872-6176 / Fax: 308-872-6596  
Lotus Notes: Nancy Ferguson;  
Website; [www.central-plains.org](http://www.central-plains.org)

This should be done as far in advance as possible to coordinate with other scholarship and financial aid opportunities.

- D. Referring a youth to the **Former Ward Program** Protection and Safety Workers should:

For youth age 18 or older in out of home care, approaching discharge or age of majority and with plans to attend college or a vocational program the Protection and Safety Worker should inform them of the Former Ward Program and assist them in completing the application if appropriate. At a minimum, this should occur three months prior to discharge.

The Protection and Safety Worker must talk to and formulate a plan with the youth about former ward and share this with the Income Maintenance Foster Care Worker. The ward must enter the former ward program prior to their aging out of custody or must meet one of the exceptions found in our Guidebook "Service Provision" Section IX. (Policy 390 NAC 5.005.05 and Guidebook "Service Provision Chapter" Section IX Former Ward Program)

- E. Referring a youth to the **Friends of Foster Care Program** the Protection and Safety Worker should:

Assist the youth in completing the application, provide the contact information to the youth's caregiver for completion of the application or complete the application on behalf of the youth. Friends of Foster Care provides funds for those items not covered by other funding sources and directed to support the youth's preparation for independent living, transition to independent living, and independence. Funds are available to youth age 16 to 21. Applications are available from Friends of Foster Care.

Contact person for applications:

Mickey Dodson

4908 Cass

Omaha, NE 68132

Phone: 402-556-5419

### **VIII. Payment for Transitional Living Programs (TLP) and Preparation for Adult Living Services (PALS)**

- A. Transitional Living Programs (TLP): Program services (assessment, instruction, supervision, management of the Independent Living Plan) through the TLP program do not require authorization on N-FOCUS. The provider is paid directly from the Office of Protection and Safety via our Chafee contract. However, federal Chafee regulations do not allow us to pay room and board with those funds.

Protection and Safety Workers should work with the Income Maintenance Foster Care Worker and open an IL program case paying up to \$352.00/month. They should also pay the provider a first month's rent and deposit of up to \$210.00 available to support youth moving to Independent Living through the CFS program case.

Providers are listed on N-FOCUS under "Cedars-TLP Chafee Funded", "Christian Heritage-TLP Chafee Funded", and "South Central Behavioral Services-TLP Chafee", Omaha Home for Boys-TLP Funded etc. As additional pilot sites are contracted, they will be loaded onto N-FOCUS following the same procedure for

naming the organization and setting up service approvals only to allow for the payment of the first month's rent and deposit.

Note: Contacting Providers: For a complete listing of providers and contact information you may contact Mark Mitchell, Chafee Coordinator at 402 471-9211.

- B. Preparation for Adult Living Services (PALS): The provider is funded through a granting/contracting process. No authorization on N-FOCUS is needed to pay them for the support "wraparound" they are providing. Youth served through PALS are living in their own apartment, or moving from their current placement into their own apartment

For youth who are state wards living in their own apartment: (including those apts. sponsored by a transitional/independent living service), you should have an open Youth and Family Services (CFS) program case and open Independent Living (IL) program case.

Youth and Family Services (CFS) program case:

In the CFS program case, show the placement type as "Independent Living" and select the "Living Arrangement" as best fits the situation i.e. "apartment or house" is the most likely choice.

Independent Living (IL) case:

Usually opened by an Income Maintenance Foster Care Eligibility Worker

These two programs allow youth the following supports:

CFS can pay for 1<sup>st</sup> month rent and deposit. The deposit is not to exceed \$210.00 (Guidebook Chapter 10 "Other Permanency Objectives" page 14 and 479 NAC 2-2002.01F1)

IL can pay up to \$352.00/month to the youth.

The youth is covered under Medicaid unless they are not properly documented; (i.e. they are an undocumented person).

Special consideration may be given for youth who are under the age of 17 if the youth is parenting a youth and/or is going to live independently within the next 6 months. Special consideration may be given for youth who live with their family of origin and meet the criteria and all other conditions to receive services.

If the youth is no longer a state ward the CFS and IL cases close.

## **IX. Youth with Developmental Disabilities**

### **A. Referral to Developmental Disabilities**

As soon as a Protection and Safety Worker has documented evidence of Mental Retardation or Developmental Disabilities, check N-Focus to see whether the youth has had eligibility for DD funding determined. If eligibility has not been determined, make a referral to DD Service Coordination for eligibility determination and work with the DD service coordinator to gather documentation needed. If eligible, talk with the DD service coordinator to determine if the child needs Active Service Coordination now or if the child's name should be placed on the Registry requesting services at a future date.

At the time of an out-of-home placement but no later than the month following the 18th birthday make application for Social Security Income (SSI). If SSI eligibility is determined prior to age 18, eligibility will need to be re-determined at age 18. SSI has more strict criteria than the DD System in regard to IQ. SSI uses information about the individual's functioning in everyday life to determine eligibility. SSI eligibility may be based on a disability that is not a developmental disability.

Sometimes Legal Aide and/or school personnel who specialize in education of youth with developmental disabilities assist in advocating for an individual and documenting the need for SSI eligibility. **Appealing the first decision may need to occur with SSI applications for eligibility.** Protection and Safety Workers may want to consult with local DD or Adult Protective Services staff who work more with making SSI applications for individuals with DD to be sure you have done all you can to assist the youth.

Apply for Medicaid and AABD at the same time as applying for SSI. (If eligible, this can be used to help fund services and will be in place prior to age 19.)

At age 18 review the need for continued guardianship following age 19. If needed, a guardian should be recruited and guardianship finalized so that the order goes into effect on the 19th birthday.

Secure DDS funding authorization prior to age 19 if a DD residential placement will be needed after age 19.

Guardianship, SSI, Medicaid, and AADB benefits, as appropriate, should be in place by the individual's 19th birthday so that there are no delays in meeting medical needs and board and room payments.

**If eligible for DD services, do not agree to graduation from school services. (The student is eligible for school services until age 21 and the DD System will not pay for day services prior to the age of 21.)**

Protection and Safety Management, Resource Development Staff/Management, and Service Area Developmental Disabilities Service Coordination Staff are available to assist the Protection and Safety Worker in planning for youth. They can assist by identifying resources available in each Service Area. Creative service development may exist to wrap necessary services and supports around the youth. They may consult with Medicaid/Medicaid Managed Care staff to plan for meeting a young person's mental health needs secondary to the developmental disability. Local Community Mental Health or Regional Mental Health Service Providers can advise Protection and Safety Workers on resources which may be available to individuals having need for mental health supportive services.

## **X. Related Policy References**

- A. The following information is provided as a reference for Protection and Safety Workers.

Financial Arrangements for Youth in Independent Living Arrangements. The Protection and Safety and Income Maintenance Foster Care Workers should determine the youth's payment. A payment may be made to or on behalf of a Department youth in an independent living situation based on the written plan

developed by the Protection and Safety Worker. Normally payment is made to the youth; however, the service plan may specify that a portion of the payment is paid to a landlord, using Forms DSS-5 and DAS 02-09. The Income Maintenance Foster Care Worker and the Protective and Safety Worker along with the youth should work together on the budget for the youth.

The youth is allowed a work allowance from any earned income. With the exception of disregarded income as listed in 479 NAC 2-001.11A4, all earned and any unearned income must be used to meet the youth's needs. The Income Maintenance Foster Care Worker uses the Form IM-26FC to compute the payment.

The following expenses are considered in determining payment:

1. Clothing;
2. Housing;
3. Transportation;
4. Food;
5. Savings;
6. Educational needs; and
7. Personal needs.

From 479 NAC 2-002.01F1 Rent Payment: With supervisory approval, the Protection and Safety worker may authorize a one-time vendor payment for a rent deposit and/or one month's rent for a Department youth who is preparing for independent living. The rent deposit must not exceed \$210.00 (2-002.01F2)

Living in a Dormitory: If a Department youth is going to school and living in a dormitory, the Department pays the dorm fees, including a deposit, either directly to the school or to the youth. The youth may receive a grant of \$100.00 maximum for his/her other needs, including meals that are not provided by the dorm. To determine the grant amount, the Income Maintenance Foster Care Worker completes Form IM-26FC, showing shelter and food costs as expenses and the monthly amount for dorm fees as unearned income.